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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652:

TAGS: MILI, US, CA

SUBJECT: CLOSURE OF POLEVULT NORTH SYSTEM RAISES QUESTIONS
ABOUT US-CANADIAN MILITARY COOPERATION

BEGIN SUMMARY. CANADA HAS DEMANDED THAT USAF BEAR
SOLE REponsibility FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CLEAN-UP COSTS
RESULTING FROM CLOSURE OF POLEVULT NORTH COMMUNICATIONS
SYSTEM. WHEN USAF SAID BOTH PARTIES HAD BENEFITTED AND
THEREFORE COSTS SHOULD BE SHARED, GOC ADAMANTLY INSISTED
SYSTEM WAS FOR USG BENEFIT AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLEAN-UP
SOLELY USAF'S. AGREEMENT FINALLY REACHED ON SPECIFIC
QUESTION OF POLEVULT SYSTEM BUT OVER-ALL ISSUE REMAINS
UNRESOLVED. GOC CLEARLY HAS PUT US ON NOTICE REGARDING
OTHER SITES (E.&., DEWLINE) AND EMBASSY URGES PROMPT
DISCUSSION WITH CANADIANS TO CLARIFY THEIR VIEW OF THEIR
RESPONSIBILITY IN BILATERAL MILITARY FIELD. END SUMMARY.

1. ON JUNE 12, A TEAM OF USG OFFICIALS MET WITH
THEIR CANADIAN COUNTERPARTS TO DISCUSS CLOSURE OF THE
POLEVULT NORTH COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS ON SCHEDULE
JUNE 30.

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2. THE GOC OPENED THE SESSION BY OUTLINING ITS LATEST

THOUGHTS ON THE SUBJECT. THESE CAN BE SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS: (1) THE DEPARTURE OF USAF WAS REGRETTABLE BUT OBVIOUSLY HAD TO BE ACCEPTED; (2) REVIEW BY CROWN ASSETS DISPOSAL CORPORATION (CADC) OF SURPLUS EQUIPMENT WHICH USAF WILLING TO LEAVE WITH GOC INDICATED THAT COSTS TOO HIGH TO MAKE REMOVAL ECONOMICALLY FEASIBLE. THEREFORE, CADC HAD ALMOST NO INTEREST IN EQUIPMENT AND PREFERRED TO TO EXERCISE ITS OPTION TO TAKE OVER THE PROPERTY; (3) CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS WOULD REQUIRE THE SITES TO BE CLEANED UP PRIOR TO USAF DEPARTURE; (4) CANADIAN DEPT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT PREPARED TO SIGN MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING WITH USAF TO CONTINUE OPERATIONS OF HOPEDALE AND MELVILLE SITES FOR THREE MONTHS AFTER USAF CLOSURE.

3. USAF INDICATED IT WAS NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT SOLE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLEAN-UP COSTS AT SITES, AND SUGGESTED THAT US AND GOC EITHER SIGN STRAIGHTFORWARD COST-SHARING AGREEMENT OR SPLIT RESPONSIBILITY: USAF WOULD CLEAN UP SAGLEK AND RESOLUTION ISLAND, CANADA WOULD CLEAN UP REMAINING SITES.

4. USAF POSITION CATEGORICALLY REJECTED BY GOC. EXTAFF OFFICIAL WHO CHAIRED MEETING (JON LEGG) SAID THAT CANADA VIEWED THE SITES AS PURELY USAF RESPONSIBILITY AND THAT THE CNEWS SYSTEM HAD BEEN OF SOLE INTEREST TO USG AND NOT TO GOC OTHER THAN IN MOST PERIPHERAL WAY. CANADA LOANED THE REAL ESTATE AND THAT WAS ALREADY CONSIDERABLE CONTRIBUTION TO SOMETHING WHICH MOSTLY OF INTEREST TO US. USG OFFICIALS STRONGLY DISAGREED AND CITED LANGUAGE OF AGREEMENT TO REFUTE CANADIAN POSITION. EVENTUALLY, CANADA AGREED THAT LINE HAD BEEN MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL, BUT STILL ADAMANTLY REFUSED TO ALTER VIEW THAT CLEAR-UP WAS SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF US. WHEN USAF INDICATED IT MIGHT THEN NOT BE ABLE TO SIGN MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING WITH TECHNICAL AGENCIES PERMITTING THEM THREE MONTHS ADDITIONAL USE OF SITES, GOC IN EFFECT SAID "SO BE IT." IT WOULD HAVE TO NOTIFY INTERESTED PARTIES THAT SERVICES WOULD CEASE AT THE END OF THIS MONTH.

5. POINT WAS MADE THAT ENVIRONMENT CANADA OFFICIALS
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HAD NEVER VISITED SITES AND WERE APPLYING UNEVALUATED AND POTENTIALLY COSTLY REGULATIONS LATE IN GAME. AFTER CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION, ENVIRONMENT CANADA OFFICIALS SAID THAT MINIMUM STANDARDS WHICH WOULD APPLY WOULD REQUIRE, AMONG A FEW OTHER THINGS, THAT EMPTY OIL DRUMS BE STACKED AND THAT GARBAGE BE COVERED AS BEST POSSIBLE. THIS REPRESENTED SIZEABLE CONCESSION AND ALOWERING OF REQUIREMENTS ON GOC PART.

6. AS RESULT, IN US CAUCUS, USAF OBTAINED QUICK DOLLAR ESTIMATE FROM CONTRACTOR REGARDING COSTS FOR SUCH CLEAN-UP. WHEN IT APPEARED THAT ESTIMATE WELL WITHIN BOUNDS, USAF RELENTED AND AGREED TO CLEAN UP SITES WITH MINOR CONTRIBUTIONS FROM CANADIANS, AND MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING WERE AGREED TO BY ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

7. COMMENT: IT WAS FORTUNATE THAT BASIC ISSUE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLEAN-UP SIDE-STEPPED AND AGREEMENT CONCLUDED SATISFACTORILY. HOWEVER, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT ISSUE NOT BE FORGOTTEN. GOC HAS CLEARLY PUT US ON NOTICE AND HAS EXPRESSED A POSITION OF UNILATERAL USG RESPONSIBILITY WHICH RAISES QUESTION OF NATURE OF US-GOC MILITARY COOPERATION. SPECIFIC ISSUE WAS RESOLVED IN PART BECUASE ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS RELUCTANTLY MODIFIED. HOWEVER, IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT GOC WILL SOON BE SENDING OFFICIALS TO OTHER US SITES (E.G., DEWLINE) TO MAKE PROPER EVALUATION AND TO NOTIFY US OFFICIALLY OF POSSIBLY MORE STRINGENT ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS. MEANWHILE, GOC TOOK POSITION OF NON-RESPONSIBILITY REGARDING US SITES IN CANADA WHICH RAISES QUESTIONS REGARDING CANADIAN MOTIVATION IN BILATERAL MILITARY IELD. MUCH OF THIS, OF COURSE, CAN BE VIEWED AS NEGOTIATING TACTIC IN EFFORT TO OBTAIN AS MUCH US FUNDING AS POSSIBLE, BUT IT IS EMBASSY'S VIEW THAT BLUFF SHOULD BE CALLED. EMBASSY THEREFORE RECOMMENDS THAT USG UNDERTAKE DISCUSSIONS IN APPROPRIATE FORUM (PERHAPS PJBD) TO CLARIFY CANADIAN POSITION AND TO OBTAIN ACCEPTANCE OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL ASPECTS OF JOINT DEFENSE, INCLUDING CLEAN-UP OPERATIONS AT US SITES IN CANADA DESIGNED TO MEET GENERALLY

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EX POST FACTO APPLICATION OF CANADIAN FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO US-CANADIAN MILITARY PREPAREDNESS MIGHT ALSO BE RAISED IS SAME FORUM.

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